



# Early Times

Infant & Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church

703-246-7121

3750 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030

Part of the Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia

*The Vision of the Infant & Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church is: All infants and toddlers with a developmental need are identified, supported, accepted, included and valued in their family and community.*

## A Note from the Director

Dear ITC Families,

The month of May has been proclaimed Early Intervention Awareness Month by Governor McDonnell. Governor McDonnell and his team have made strong statements in support of the value of early intervention services, yet we are simultaneously facing funding shortages from the state level. In the proclamation, Governor McDonnell states the following: "WHEREAS, Virginia's children are among our Commonwealth's most valuable, precious and vulnerable citizens, and they require proper care and attention as soon as they are born and throughout their formative years; and WHEREAS, some children are born with developmental delays and disabilities, and it is crucial that these children receive immediate intervention treatment upon diagnosis;"

Ironically, this proclamation comes as Fairfax County and the rest of the state is left unable to provide those valuable services to all of the children in need. This shortfall is the product of ITC programs across the state that have seen tremendous growth in new clients as the result of efforts aimed at reaching every family who would be eligible for these mandated services. In Fairfax County, Fairfax City, and the City of Falls Church we have experienced growth of more than 38% since 2010. Unfortunately we have seen no increase in sustained State funding to accommodate the growth of recent years.

After presenting information on the dire need for these critical services to the state, we did receive some onetime funding, but there is no more funding available and the onetime funds simply do not cover the service needs. Statewide ITC programs will start the new fiscal year (7/1/2012) with a \$4 million dollar deficit. That calculation is based on only being able to serve the same number of children as last year. However, we expect the growth in referrals to continue, so the anticipated deficit is likely much higher than the \$4 million projected. This is a very serious problem as newly eligible children here in Fairfax will have to wait to receive the services and supports that we recommend. This means that locally we will be out of compliance with the Federal requirements for these services, and most importantly, children will not "receive immediate intervention treatment upon diagnosis" and therefore, will fall further behind in their development.

We believe that early intervention works. It is the best investment we can make with our state and local tax dollars. Children who receive early intervention in a family centered model become active participants in their schools and communities. By missing this window of opportunity, children and families are being set up for a lifetime of needlessly exacerbated struggles. This is unacceptable!

Virginia needs to be accountable to our vulnerable children. They deserve every opportunity to meet their full potential. Please let the leadership of Virginia know how important this program is and request that they find a way to sustainably fund this program. To find your local Virginia Senator or Delegate go to, <http://conview.state.va.us/whosmy.nsf/main?openform>. Type in your address and you can email directly based upon the contact info provided on that site. Please contact me at 703-246-7170 or [allan.phillips@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:allan.phillips@fairfaxcounty.gov) if you have questions or concerns you wish to express to me.

Allan Phillips, Director, ITC



**Infant & Toddler  
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## ITCFF's PURPOSE

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church provides early intervention supports and services to infants and toddlers from birth to age three who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay normal development. Early intervention supports and services focus on increasing the child's participation in family and community activities that are important to the family. In addition, supports and services focus on helping parents and other caregivers know how to find ways to help the child learn during everyday activities. These supports and services are available for all eligible children and their families regardless of the family's ability to pay.

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## WHY EARLY INTERVENTION MATTERS by Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee District)

It's a parent's nightmare—one day—out of the blue, your princess, your first-born, your two-year-old daughter, loses her ability to speak. There's no identifiable reason and my wife and I were devastated.

This story has a happy ending because, fortunately, we live in Fairfax County. I hope that no one reading this ever needs one of our human services programs, but, should that happen, it's comforting to know that Fairfax County has a commitment to all of its residents, regardless of their abilities.

When this mutism struck, my daughter was referred to the Infant Toddler Connection (ITC) at the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

I've worked for Fairfax County for more than 16 years but I had never heard of this organization. After months of therapy through the ITC, my daughter recovered her speech and is communicating fluently. In fact, like most four-year-olds, she never stops talking and I have a new appreciation for the voices of young children and for the ITC.

Not only did the ITC change my life, but it potentially saved the County a far more costly intervention later. Think about what intense speech therapy would have cost our school system and then compare that cost to the far smaller cost of early intervention.

Alarm bells went off when I heard that the ITC was going to stop admitting early intervention clients because of state budget cuts. As a parent, an elected official, and a taxpayer, I am appalled and more than appalled—I am outraged. Not only are these budget cuts abdication of our moral responsibility to our children but they are a poor financial decision.

Early intervention is the key to managing or healing developmental disabilities. It's penny-wise and pound-foolish to abolish programs for children, and then a few years down the road, pay a much larger bill for critical services for them when they are older.

As an elected official, I'm in the unique position of hearing about the many excellent services we provide at the local level. As a parent who used those services, I am profoundly grateful to our taxpayers and their support.

I'm not blind to the financial constraints of the Great Recession and its impact on our state and local budgets, as well as individuals' budgets. However, cutting preventative programs makes no financial sense. That's like investing in a new car, not making routine repairs, and wondering why a more costly bill for an overhaul has come due.

Virginia has shortchanged our human service needs for a long time and Fairfax County has stepped into the gap and shouldered the costs of providing these services for our residents. Now we need to step up again.

My wife and I may never know why our daughter went mute. We do know, however, that every time our daughter speaks, we thank our lucky stars that we can call Fairfax County home. I aim to keep it that way—for all our residents and all our children.

*This op-ed appeared in the Connection Newspapers on 4/19/12.*

## Websites You Can Use

### **Certifikid**

A website with offers for families of children with special needs [www.certifikid.com/special\\_needs](http://www.certifikid.com/special_needs).

### **MyAutismTeam**

A social network for parents of children with autism at [www.myautismteam.com](http://www.myautismteam.com).

### **Virginia Parent Resource Centers: Linking Families, Schools and Communities**

Offering resources, information and training sessions to families of children receiving special education services. [www.vaprcs.org](http://www.vaprcs.org).

### **CELL Practice Guides**

CELL (Center for Early Literacy Learning) has guides that make it easier for young children with disabilities to participate in literacy learning activities. The guides describe everyday home, community, and childcare learning opportunities. [www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pg\\_tier2.php](http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/pg_tier2.php)


### **EFMP Program & Newsletter**

Over 100,000 military families have members with special needs. These family members have a diagnosed physical, intellectual, or emotional condition. The Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) works with these families to address their unique needs. Military HOMEFRONT website gives service members and their families critical information and resources related to EFMP. There is a monthly e-newsletter available to anyone by subscription. April's newsletter includes an article on Autism Awareness and another on Sibling Support. To subscribe to the online newsletter, go to <http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=AMS:SUBSCRIBE>




### **The 7th Annual Special Education Conference**

workshop presentations are now available for online viewing or to download at [www.fcps.edu/dss/conference/](http://www.fcps.edu/dss/conference/). Contact the PRC for questions at 703-204-3941.

## May 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 
27	28	29	30	31		

## June 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 
3	4	5	6	7 	8	9
10	11 	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 

### Apps You Can Use

**See Me Go Potty**, a distinctively useful and exceptionally fun potty trainer... This app is a great teaching tool. The layout is intentionally simple and free of distractions. Fifteen actionable potty training tips including concrete advice about preparation, behavioral reinforcement, behavioral shaping, when to continue vs. take a break and more, for typically developing children as well as children with developmental delays and communication disabilities. Available for Apple & Android. Go to [www.avakid.com](http://www.avakid.com) for more information.

**urTalker**, was developed to enable individuals who have speech and communication disabilities, an opportunity to have a voice. Every app is preloaded with default categories and images and provides the ability to create word categories and load additional images. It also allows the recording of audio for use with those images and words. urTalker was developed to help the founders' non-verbal autistic child to have a voice. Go to [www.urtalker.com](http://www.urtalker.com) for more information.

### Find an Accessible Playground

An accessible playground means it's as easy as possible for everyone to play, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. On [www.accessibleplayground.net](http://www.accessibleplayground.net), you can search for playgrounds via a state directory, educate yourself about accessible play, find resources on all aspects of designing and building a playground in your community, and more.

## Upcoming Workshops/Events

**Saturday, May 26** 9:00am-2:00pm **FREE**

**Saturday, June 30**

### Safety Seat Saturday

Fairfax Cty. Public Safety Center, Public Parking Garage  
10550 Page Avenue, Fairfax

Specially trained and certified sheriff's deputies will help parents and caregivers ensure that a child fits securely in the safety seat and that the safety seat fits securely in the vehicle seat. Bring your vehicle and safety seat(s). Bring your child, too...if he or she is available!



**Saturday, June 2** 10:00am-2:00pm **FREE**

### Annual Picnic & Fishing Derby for Children and Adults with Disabilities

10470 Mount Olive Road, Centreville

Come out and enjoy a day of fishing and outdoor fun, hayride, air rifle shooting, archery shooting and lunch, presented by the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter of Izaak Walton League of America. Contact Pamela Meara at 703-362-7293 or [pmeara01@gmail.com](mailto:pmeara01@gmail.com) to register.



**Thursday, June 7** 6:15-9:00pm **FREE**

### Tricare & Other Benefits for Military Parents of Children with Autism & Other Disabilities

Army Community Service, 9800 Belvoir Road, Bldg. 200  
Fort Belvoir

To register, contact Marcia O'Connor at 703-696-8467



**Monday, June 11** 6:30-8:00pm **FREE**

### The Role of Fathers & Male Role Models Workshop

Presented by SCAN in collaboration with Capital Youth Empowerment Program

First Assembly of God Church, 700 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria

No RSVP Required, childcare provided. For more information, contact Sam at 703-820-9001.



**Saturday, June 23** 8:30-11:00am **FREE**

### BRAVE, the newest family fun movie from Disney

**PIXAR**, an exclusive invitation for families with special needs, presented by Waddell Group. In addition to the free movie, there will be coffee, an introduction to financial planning for families with special needs and information from Arlington SEP-TA and other resource providers.

AMC Tyson's Corner I, McLean

Seating is limited, online RSVP by June 20 at

[www.waddellgroup.net](http://www.waddellgroup.net).

Don't miss the May issue of **The Exceptional**

**Advocate!** It features an inspirational article about Jeremy Hilton, Air Force Spouse of the Year & now Military Spouse of the Year,, and Fairfax County dad of an ITC graduate. This magazine is not just for military families with information about Mental Health Awareness, Respite, Celiac Disease and more. Read it online at

<http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/efmp/book/2012/May/>

## DISABILITY BENEFITS ARE NOT JUST FOR GROWN-UPS

By David J. Melton, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

When you hear about disability benefits, you probably think about adults. But disability benefits are not just for grown-ups. In some cases, children can receive benefits too.

If your child who lives with you has a disability, and you also have limited income and resources, your child may be able to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits. SSI is another program run by Social Security. SSI is a needs-based program funded through general tax revenues.

To qualify for SSI, your child must meet the following requirements:

- Under age 18
- Not be working and earning more than \$1,010 a month in 2012. (This earnings amount changes every year.) If he or she is working and earning that much money, we will determine that your child is not disabled.
- Have a physical or mental condition (or a combination of conditions) those results in "marked and severe functional limitations." This means that the condition(s) must very seriously limit your child's activities.
- Have a condition that has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months, or is expected to result in death.


Once your child reaches age 18, SSI disability benefits might still be payable as an adult. Also, an adult who was disabled before reaching age 22 might be eligible for Social Security benefits as a "disabled adult child." For a disabled adult to become entitled to this "child" benefit, one of his or her parents:

- Must be receiving Social Security retirement or disability benefits; or
- Must be deceased and have worked long enough to be covered under Social Security.

Are you ready to get started with an application for your child? The best way to begin is by checking out the Disability Starter Kit at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability).

You can apply for Social Security or SSI payments for your child by calling Social Security toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or by visiting your local Social Security office. If you are applying for SSI payments for your child, you should have his or her Social Security number and birth certificate with you when you apply. We also will ask you for your Social Security number.

Learn more by reading Social Security's online publication, Benefits For Children With Disabilities, at [www.socialsecurity.gov/](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/)

 To request this information in an alternate format, call ITC-FFC, 703-246-7180, 703-538-5292 (TTY). Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request special accommodations call ITC-FFC, 703-246-7180, 703-538-5292 (TTY). Please allow seven working days in advance of the event in order to make the necessary arrangements.

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Address Correction Requested